

EDUCATION OUTREACH PROGRAMS OF OREGON BALLET THEATRE

WHERE DANCE AND ACADEMICS MEET

STUDENT PERFORMANCE SERIES STUDY GUIDE: PAST AND PRESENT - *POR VOS MUERO*

October 17, 2013 / Keller Auditorium
Noon - 1:00 pm / Doors open at 11:30am

Dear Educators,

Each year the dancers of Oregon Ballet Theatre present a series of uniquely themed performances in Portland's Keller Auditorium or Newmark Theater. Our October performances for the public are entitled DREAM and occur from October 12 - October 19 at the Keller. The name DREAM reflects the essence of the two works being performed: the company premiere of Spanish choreographer Nacho Duato's *Por Vos Muero* – a dreamy evocation of baroque romanticism as seen through a contemporary lens, and Christopher Stowell's witty and tender *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.



Photo by Joni Kabana

Each year OBT also develops a special one hour matinee series during the school day entitled the **Student Performance Series**, designed to support educational exposure to the arts for our community's youth. At noon this October 17th, OBT will show *Por Vos Muero* in its entirety as well as an excerpt from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The curricular theme of this **Student Performance Series** is **Past and Present**, revealing the work of two present day choreographers who took inspiration from: poetry and music of the past, the eternal idea of love and its many complexities, and the ever present capacity for today's dancers to challenge themselves to new levels of creative expression. The choreography communicates that inspiration with dance movements that were popular in the past—upright courtly gestures, earthy folk dance



Gavin Larsen and Adrian Fry in Christopher Stowell's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Photo by Blaine Truitt Covert.



Ashley Blade-Martin and Alfonso Martin in Nacho Duato's *Por Vos Muero*. Photo by Sharen Bradford.

steps, weightless ballet jumps—and includes athletic and expressive dance movements seen today—off-balance shapes with rippling spines, intricate partner dancing, and emotionally charged gestures.

This Study Guide focuses primarily on *Por Vos Muero*, the main work to be performed. As you read the SPS Study Guide you will see underlined words. These words are further defined in the Vocabulary section later in the guide.

We will close the performance with an excerpt from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* which OBT premiered in the fall of 2007. At that time we performed the entire work in the **Student Performance Series** and dedicated a Study Guide to it. To read that, go to OBT's archive of Educational Resources to find and download the Study Guide for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* found under the title "The Germanic Lands":

 http://www.obt.org/outreach_links/SPS_Germanic07.pdf

Doors open at 11:30—See you then!

Kassandra Gruener, MA
Director of Education Outreach



Photo by Joni Kabana

KEY TO USING THE STUDY GUIDE



= Academic connections or discussion points



= Activities designed to get students up and moving

KASANDRA GRUENER, MA / DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION OUTREACH

KEVIN IRVING / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

OBT'S EDUCATION OUTREACH
PROGRAMMING IS SUPPORTED BY

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POR VOS MUERO NACHO DUATO

A choreographer plays with many elements when creating a ballet. One of the ideas that Nacho Duato explores in *Por Vos Muero* is the commonality of human experience across time. History reveals that dancing has been an integral part of life around the globe. Dance steps may be very complicated, technically challenging, and look different from one culture to another and from one era to the next. Dance may be done in elaborate costumes for entertainment or with a somber demeanor for religious ceremonies. Although there are exceptions, when people around the world come together to relax or celebrate, they play music, sing, and often dance with one another.



Nacho Duato's *Por Vos Muero*. Photo by David Herrero.

SPATIAL DESIGN

Duato created his ballet to traditional Spanish music from the 15th and 16th centuries, music that would have been played to accompany people dancing. Nobles from the courts of Spain as well as village and farm peasants learned dances that incorporated spatial formations that matched or contrasted with the music's phrases and rhythms. The dance patterns caused people to meet and pass by one another, creating acceptable yet formal ways for men and women to interact as they exchanged partners, caught swift glances while love bloomed, touched hands or exuberantly clapped to the beat of the music.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS:

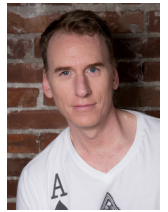


We could watch the entire ballet just looking at spatial formations, as if the paths that the dancers make draw lines in space, like a painter making marks on a canvas. When you watch the ballet, notice how the dancers move in formations. How would you describe the designs that you see? What words come to mind--circles, lines, squares, zig-zags, open space, crowded space, groups in front or back, going from side to side, duets, trios, etc.? How does this compare to the ways that we might dance at a party today? How does this compare to spatial formations seen in other activities, like football, air traffic pathways, or crowds of people walking in the streets?

OBT'S ARTISTIC DIRECTOR KEVIN IRVING IS STAGING POR VOS MUERO ...

...speaking about the task of teaching the ballet to the dancers: *This is dense choreography! 40 seconds of choreography = 1 hour to teach!*

...speaking about the movement complexity a dancer must complete: *Turned in attitude, grab foot with hand, other hand is flexed and you touch your fingers to your chin, in plié... And that's count 1!"*



Kevin Irving
Photo by
Joni Kabana

INFLUENCE OF MUSIC

NACHO DUATO SAYS...

I listen to music all day long, the images appear in my head, my ballets are actually interpretations of music by movement.

[Internet article: Introdans]



Por Vos Muero is constructed on several selections of ancient Spanish music. The music is infused with many qualities—percussive, sonorous and emotive—and the dancers are tasked to interpret the music through the steps they perform. The following list includes three tracks found on iTunes that are used in *Por Vos Muero* performed by Jordi Savall:

Album: Music for the Spanish Kings;
Hesperion XX and Jordi Savall

Composer: Mateo Flecha

Music title: *Dindirindin* ('de la Ensalada La Bomba')

Album: Cançons De La Catalunya Mil·lenària; Jordi Savall

Composer: Traditional

Music Title: *El Mestre*

Album: El Concionero de Medinaceli (1535-1595)

Composer: Pedro Guerrero

Music Title: *Di, Perra Mora*

Other music of the era, played by Jordi Savall, found on iTunes:

Album: *Altres Follies* (1500-1750)

Artists: Hesperion XXI & Jordi Savall

IMAGINING WHILE LISTENING



While listening to the music, imagine being in Spain during the time it was written. Perhaps go to the library or online to look at painting from the 1500's like these two—one of a musician and the other of peasants dancing in the streets.



The Peasants' Dance, Netherlands, late 1500s. Painted in 1568 by the Flemish painter Pieter Bruegel. Painting is in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

GOING BACK IN TIME

The art of dance includes many elements such as the spatial patterning and musical influences just discussed. Another element that Duato explores in *Por Vos Muero* is our idea of past and present time. This is an idea that many people explore. How do people, like scientists, filmmakers, science fiction writers, and choreographers express the idea of going back in time? Audiences who have seen *Por Vos Muero* say that it seems to take them back to another time and place. How does the choreographer Nacho Duato accomplish that? He doesn't put the dancers into a time altering device such as HG Wells wrote about in his 1895 *The Time Machine*. Nor does Duato drop the dancers into a 1981 De Lorean car to zoom into the past like in the movie *Back to the Future*. He doesn't solve the problem of time traveling the way J. K. Rowling's Hermione Granger did in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* by having the dancers wear Time-Turner necklaces. In these examples there is a device or method that helps the reader or audience know that we are not in the present.

[Stop here if you want to be surprised and see for yourself at the theatre how Duato handles time!]

In the beginning of the ballet, the dancers walk in slow motion with their backs to the audience, traveling from downstage to upstage. They wear neutral skin-toned costumes that emphasize the essential commonality of us all. Later we see the dancers, emerging from the shadows, facing the audience, traveling forward, but now clothed in beautiful velvet and silk costumes that remind us of lords and ladies of the Spanish courts.



"Mezzetin" by Jean-Antoine Watteau

QUESTIONS TO ASK AFTER SEEING THE BALLET:



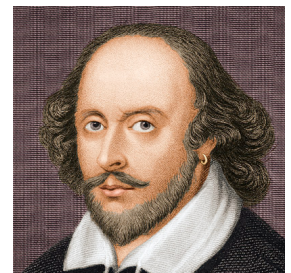
After the ballet ask students what they noticed regarding the past and present. Ask if the ballet ended with the dancers still in the past or were they now returned to the present? Or in both? What speed did the dancers move in to convey the passage of time? What is it like when dancers do not face the audience? What parts of 1500's Spanish court life did the students see—for instance did they notice the jesters? Why did the dancers use masks? What effect did the masks create?



Nacho Duato's *Por Vos Muero*. Photo: Edwina Pickles

POETRY AS INSPIRATION:

Both ballets draw inspiration from poetry of the 1500's. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* gleams from the work of William Shakespeare. In *Por Vos Muero* the audience will hear haunting love poetry written by Garcilaso de la Vega, one of the most important and influential Spanish language poets. Spanish speakers will have a treat to hear seven poems recited in Spanish within the piece. Here is the Spanish version of Garcilaso de la Vega's *Soneto V*, followed by a breakdown of the poem's syllables and then an English translation. More translations of the poetry in the ballet will be available online at http://www.obt.org/outreach_resources.html. *Soneto V* is the final sonnet used in the ballet, as it is also the inspiration for the title.



William Shakespeare

Soneto V

Escrito está en mi alma vuestro gesto,
y cuanto yo escribir de vos deseo;
vos sola lo escribisteis, yo lo leo
tan solo, que aun de vos me guardo en esto.

En esto estoy y estaré siempre puesto;
que aunque no cabe en mí cuanto en vos veo,
de tanto bien lo que no entiendo creo,
tomando ya la fe por presupuesto.

Yo no nací sino para quereros;
mi alma os ha cortado a su medida;
por hábito del alma mismo os quiero.

Cuanto tengo confieso yo deberos;
por vos nací, por vos tengo la vida,
por vos he de morir, y por vos muero.

Lee todo en: SONETO V - Poemas de Garcilaso de la Vega

 <http://www.poemas-del-alma.com/garcilaso-de-la-vega-soneto-v.htm#ixzz2ZuQgTD25>

Metric for the Spanish versión
Es/crí/to es/tá en/ mi al/ma/ vues/tro/ ges/to,/ /
= 10 sílabas

y/ cuan/to/ yo es/crí/bir/ de/ vos/ de/se/o;/ /
= 11 sílabas

vos/ so/la/ lo es/crí/bis/teis,/ yo/ lo/ le/o/
= 11 sílabas

tan/ so/lo,/ que aun/ de/ vos/ me/ guar/do en/ es/to./ /
= 11 sílabas

En/ es/to es/toy/ y es/ta/ré/ siem/pre/ pues/to;/ /
= 11 sílabas

que aun/que/ no/ ca/be en/ mí/ cuan/to en/ vos/ ve/o,/ /
= 11 sílabas

de/ tan/to/ bien/ lo/ que/ no en/tien/do/ cre/o,/ /
= 11 sílabas

to/man/do/ ya/ la/ fe/ por/ pre/su/pues/to./ /
= 11 sílabas

Yo/ no/ na/cí/ si/no/ pa/ra/ que/re/ros;/ /
= 11 sílabas

mi al/ma os/ ha/ cor/ta/do a/ su/ me/di/da;/ /
= 10 sílabas

por/ há/bi/to/ del/ al/ma/ mis/mo os/ quie/ro./ /
= 11 sílabas

Cuan/to/ ten/go/ con/fie/so/ yo/ de/be/ros;/ /
= 11 sílabas

por/ vos/ na/cí,/ por/ vos/ ten/go/ la/ vi/da,/ /
= 11 sílabas

por/ vos/ he/ de/ mo/rir,/ y/ por/ vos/ mue/ro./ /
= 11 sílabas

Translation by Keith Beckman

Your every aspect is written on my soul:
and how much more I desire to write!
None but you has written, and I may only read,
that in reading, I might hide even from you.
In this I am and ever will be settled,
even though I see in you some few incompatibilities
(because I do not well understand what I believe,
already taking my fidelity for granted).
I was not born but to love you.
You my soul has cut to its measure:
it's you I want as a cloak for my soul.
How much I must confess I owe you:
for you I was born, for you I have life.
Were it necessary, for you I would die;
and for you I do die.



Garcilaso de la Vega

OPPORTUNITY FOR EMPATHY

Many audience members will not be fluent in Spanish and therefore not understand the pre-recorded score of poetry accompanying the music during the ballet. This is a great opportunity for teachers to discuss what it is like to be in a place where your native language is not commonly spoken. This ballet originally premiered in Spain, so everyone would have been able to understand the words, although poetry in any language requires focused attention in order to get the meaning. Since its premiere the ballet has been performed in many locations around the world. When we don't know the language, how do we figure out what is being expressed?



During *Por Vos Muero*, students can listen to the tone of voice of the reader and watch the body language of the dancers and guess about the meaning of the poetry. They can ask themselves, "How are the dancers showing their feelings? Does the voice make me think of certain ideas or feelings?" And students can just listen to the spoken poetry as if it were another musical instrument, forgetting all about the meaning behind the words and just enjoy the dancing. Taking this further, students might discuss how they read peoples' body language every day. Students might also discuss and remember examples of how words and body language are sometimes at cross purposes—such as when we say we are "just fine" while we deeply slump in a chair.

BODY LANGUAGE SNAP SHOT GAME



One student or the teacher volunteers to be the "Character." The Character thinks of a feeling (like being nervous), or an attitude (like being snobbish) and portrays that with his/her body as they walk from one side of the room to the other side, one time. Sometimes it helps the Character to think of a person from a movie. The class is then challenged to notice the body language of the Character and take a focused look—a mental snap shot—noticing how the person walks and stands, twitches etc. The class then writes their observation down on a piece of paper including their supporting reasons as to why they think the person is that feeling or attitude. What did the person do to make the class come to their conclusions? The goal is to try to figure out what is going on by only watching body language, and then be able to write about it. This activity relates to Common Core's interest in language literacy—in this case it is body language.

COMMON CORE, LITERACY, AND DANCE

“Appendix B”, a publication supporting teachers for the Common Core State Standards, has several grade level selections of poetry that allude to dance. Here are some titles and the first line of the poem:

Grade K-1: Lopez, Alonzo. “Celebration.” Song and Dance. Selected by Lee Bennett Hopkins. Illustrated by Cheryl Munro Taylor. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997. (1993)

I shall dance tonight....

Grade 2-3: Soto, Gary. “Eating While Reading.” The 20th Century Children’s Poetry Treasury. Selected by Jack Prelutsky. Illustrated by Meilo So. New York: Knopf, 1999. (1995)

What is better...

Grade 4-5: Mora, Pat. “Words Free As Confetti.” Confetti: Poems for Children. Illustrated by Enrique O. Sanchez. New York: Lee and Low, 1999. (1996)

Come, words, come in your every color.

Here is the web address for: Common Core State Standards For English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects


Appendix B: Text Exemplars and Sample Performance Tasks

 http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf

MORE WAYS TO ENJOY *POR VOS MUERO!*

In an online column in Psychology Today called *Imagine That!* (Published on January 26, 2010) authors Michele and Robert Root-Bernstein discussed the YouTube video [mashup](#) by Renada Ward that removes the original Spanish music and poetry of the opening section of *Por Vos Muero*, replacing it with Beyonce’s hit song, *Halo*. At this writing there had been 379,108 viewings. Robert and Michele Root-Bernstein are co-authors of *Sparks of Genius, The 13 Thinking Tools of the World’s Most Creative People* (Houghton Mifflin, 1999).

Read the article:

 <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/imagine/201001/cubbyholes-and-creative-mashups-thoughts-crossing-beyonces-halo-and-nacho-duatos>

Check out this mashup after you see the ballet in the theatre!

 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0z2aqB9Swy0>

Read more about the Nacho Duato’s career and influences and see a clip of *Por Vos Muero*:

 <http://www.theballetbag.com/2013/06/12/nacho-duato/>

VOCABULARY

Choreography: Choreography is the composition and arrangement of movements that make up dances.

Attitude: A Ballet position. In ballet, one form of attitude is a pose where the dancer stands on one leg with the other leg lifted to the back in a bent position—the knee is lifted and the lower part of the leg is horizontal.

Plié: French word meaning to bend. A plié on the standing leg means to bend at the knees, lowering the body.

Ballet: A ballet is a work of dance art. It can be of varying lengths of time and is composed of stylized movements that may or may not tell a story. Ballet is also the name of a form of dancing that originated in the courts of Europe. This form of dancing is traditionally upright, utilizes “turn out” which is the outward rotation of the legs starting at the hip socket (standing with toes pointing away from the midline of the body) that allows a full range of motion, and includes partner dancing that showcases challenging balances and lifts all based on an aesthetic of harmonious design.

Mashup: A mashup blends parts of unrelated pre-existing music, video, text, or dance combining to create a new work or idea.

Downstage and Upstage: Down stage (DS) is the front part of the stage closest to the audience, and upstage (US) is at the back of the stage, away from the audience. Why is the front of the stage “down” and the back of the stage “up”? Early theatres constructed tilted stages, with the back of the stage higher than the front of the stage. Such stages are called raked stages. This enables the audience sitting on a level surface to better see the performers in the back of the stage. Some of these stages still exist—imagine how hard it is to dance on a slanted floor! Nowadays stages like the Keller Auditorium, are built level and the seats of the audience are elevated, rising above the stage.

Stage directions for right and left

are taken from the point of view of the performer as they look at the audience—Stage Right (SR) is to the right as they face the audience. Stage directions are opposite of the audience’s view of right and left. Stage directions remain constant, regardless of the performers’ movements—the names of stage directions are the same even if the dancer is facing away from the audience.



Photo: Alison Roper and Brett Bauer in Nacho Duato’s *Por Vos Muero*. Photo by Joni Kabana.

CONTENT STANDARDS

This *Student Performance Series* and Study Guide provide opportunity for engaging in Oregon Content Standards for the Arts, especially:

Create, Present and Perform: Apply ideas, techniques and processes in the arts.

Historical and Cultural Perspective: Understand relationships of works of art to their social, historical, and cultural context, and the influence of arts on individuals, communities and cultures.

Aesthetics and Criticism: Respond to and analyze works of art, based on essential elements, organizational principles and aesthetic criteria.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BALLET

WHY DO THE GUYS WEAR TIGHTS?

Almost every activity requires a special uniform of some kind. Just as football players, wrestlers, and baseball players wear stretchy material to help them move with flexibility and speed, ballet dancers often wear stretchy tights so they are able to leap, kick, and stretch as they dance. Another reason tights are worn is so the audience can see the incredible leg muscles that allow them to jump so high.

HOW DO THE BALLET DANCERS STAND ON THEIR TOES?

Female ballet dancers wear special shoes called "pointe shoes" to help them achieve dancing on the tips of their toes. Pointe shoes are hard at the ends, and are handmade with layers of satin, glue and leather. Dancers must take several years of ballet lessons before they are allowed to wear pointe shoes. With hard work and good training to develop strong ankles and feet, most young ballet students begin working en pointe at age 11 or 12.

THIS BALLET HAS NO PLOT! OR DOES IT?

Some do, and some don't. Ballets with plots, like *The Nutcracker*, are called story ballets. There are also abstract ballets, with a focus on movement instead of a specific story. Abstract ballets are meant to evoke ideas or emotions, and the audience can interpret them many different ways.

HOW OLD ARE THE DANCERS?

Oregon Ballet Theatre's professional company members range in age from 18 to 39, but most are in their early-to-mid-20s. All of the dancers began studying ballet when they were children, as it takes many years of dedication to become a professional ballet dancer.

HOW OFTEN DO THEY PRACTICE?

Ballet dancers take class every morning for 1.5 hours, and then they rehearse all day. They have Sundays and sometimes Saturdays off, and they have a lunch break. Dancing is their full-time job.

WHERE ARE THE DANCERS FROM?

Oregon Ballet Theatre dancers come from all around the world: Japan, China, and different areas within the United States. There are dancers from California, Washington, New Jersey, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, New York, and several who grew up right here in Oregon.

APPLAUSE

DO clap after a really spectacular movement. Laugh if the situation onstage is funny. Applaud and say "Bravo!" at the end.

DON'T boo, whistle, hiss or make noise during the performance. It is distracting and disrespectful of the performers and to your neighbors in the audience.

FOOD

DO eat before you get to the theater if you think you might get hungry before the performance is over.

DON'T bring food or gum into the seating area. It makes noise, trash, and distractions.

TALKING

DO wait. Make a note on your program or a piece of paper if you want to remember something. Tell your friend after the ballet is over.

DON'T whisper or discuss things with other people during the performance. Your friends may want to listen to the music or pay attention to the dancers' movement or the story.

DRESS & BACKPACKS

DO dress neatly as a sign of respect to the artists and the theater.

DON'T wear over-powering perfume, big hats, or jingly bracelets. Leave backpacks at school. If you must bring one, you'll be asked to leave it in the lobby.

CELL PHONES, CAMERAS, IPODS, MP3 PLAYERS, ETC.

DO relax when the lights in the house (seating area) get dark. Sit back and enjoy the live performance with your eyes, ears, and imagination.

DON'T bring electronic devices into the theater. The noise and clicking can be distracting to your neighbors, and camera flashes can be dangerous to the dancers.

PLEASE DIRECT ANY QUESTIONS TO:

Kasandra Gruener, MA, Director of Education Outreach
phone: 503.227.0977 x212 / email: outreach@obt.org / www.obt.org/outreach_youth.html